

# Master of Arts in African and African-American Studies

The Department of African and African-American Studies offers interdisciplinary substantive and language courses leading to the Master of Arts degree in two areas of concentration: (1) African, and (2) African-American studies.

The master's degree in African and African-American Studies has two related objectives: (1) it fulfills the educational needs of persons who seek positions with organizations in both the public and private sectors, and (2) it prepares persons who desire to pursue the terminal degrees in their field. The program emphasizes the broader concepts in the humanities and the social sciences but provides an option for concentration in either African or African-American Studies.

The integrative focus of the curriculum is an important characteristic of the interdisciplinary nature of this program. In this regard, the candidate should develop the capacity to continue as a self-educator throughout their career. Broad background study in this field enables the graduate to assimilate newly-acquired skills and methodologies quickly. Graduates should be prepared to cope with the rapid changes in Africa and the African diaspora. The program places considerable emphasis on both the internal and external forces which affect African and African-American societies. The continuity and change in Africa and their impact on world civilizations are emphasized in both the required courses and through electives.

Students may further refine their studies by selecting courses under the African Studies concentration for Arabic and Islamic Studies and under the African-American Studies concentration for Haitian Studies. Accommodation also exists for members of the Armed Forces to complete their studies on any and all regions of the African continent in less than 2 years if they are willing to study through summer.

## Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://catalog.ku.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/>) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

## Admission to the M.A. Program

Prospective students are admitted to the M.A. program for the fall or spring semester.

- Application deadline for fall admission: **May 1**. For first consideration of funding, it is highly encouraged to apply by **January 15**.
- Application deadline for spring admission: **October 1**

Eligibility criteria for admission to the M.A. program follow Graduate Studies' admission policy. To be considered for admission, a student must hold a bachelor's degree. A full list of the required application materials can be found on the Department's website (<https://afs.ku.edu/grad-admission/>).

Non-native speakers of English must meet Graduate Studies' English proficiency requirements (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/english-proficiency-international-students/>).

## M.A. Degree Requirements

The African and African-American studies M.A. program takes 2 years of full-time study. Nine upper-division and graduate courses, in addition to a thesis or additional course work for a critical creative project option, are required for the degree—a total of 33 credit hours.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Core courses</b>		
AAAS 801	Introduction to Africana Studies: African-American	3
AAAS 802	Introduction to Africana Studies: African	3
AAAS 803	Research Methods in Africana Studies	3
AAAS 804	Seminar in Africana Studies	3
<b>Area of specialization</b>		
	Students are expected to choose 5 courses in their areas of specialization. Courses should be selected in consultation with the student's faculty advisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies. A list of graduate-level courses that can count toward the M.A., offered in AAAS and in other departments, can be found on the AAAS website.	15
Students can take 6 credit hours outside the department in related course offerings including among others American studies; anthropology; art; communication studies; economics; education; English; film and media studies; geography; history; philosophy; political science; religion; sociology; theatre; and women, gender, and sexuality studies.		
<b>Thesis Option</b>		
AAAS 899	Thesis	6
No more than 6 thesis hours may be applied toward the 33 credit hours.		

## Critical Creative Project Option

A critical creative project option is also available. If this option is chosen, the student will take 2 more 3-hour specialization courses and develop a creative project containing 2 pieces of work including, but not limited to, research papers, creative/artistic works, exhibitions, and digital humanities projects.

## Thesis/Critical Creative Project Defense

A final oral defense of the thesis or creative critical project is required and is held during the student's final semester in the program. The defense includes questions about the thesis/project topic, argument, methodology, as well as questions that discuss the topics within large contexts of the field. After the defense, the committee will deliberate regarding the outcome (satisfactory or unsatisfactory).

## Course Level Requirement

Students pursuing an M.A. in African & African-American Studies must take 50% or more of their course work at the 700 level or above. Core courses and thesis hours (if applicable) count toward this requirement.

## Research Skills

Students will fulfill a language/research skills requirement in accordance with the concentration chosen. Language/research skills courses must be at the 500 level or above to be counted toward the 33 hours required for the degree.

1. A master's degree in African and African-American studies with an African studies concentration requires proficiency in an African language. Proficiency may be fulfilled by 1 of the following:
  - Completing 2 years of college-level language study at KU, at an equivalent institution, or through an intensive course. Language courses offered on a regular basis at KU that count toward proficiency are Amharic, Arabic, Hausa, KiSwahili, Somali, Wolof and any one of the number of African languages for which the Kansas African Studies Center has pedagogical materials and proficiency-testing capabilities.
  - The equivalent of 2 years of an approved language.
  - Proof that the student is a native speaker of an African language.
2. A master's degree in African and African-American studies with an African-American Studies concentration requires that a student
  - Fulfill the African language requirement outlined above, or
  - Fulfill Haitian Creole or any other non-African language requirement employing standards comparable to those governing the African language requirement outlined above, or
  - Demonstrate competence in a research skill relevant to the student's specific concentration in African-American studies. Competence in a research skill is certified by the department's Director of Graduate Studies.

In consultation with their advisors and to the satisfaction of the department, students must demonstrate that their choice of a language or research skill is appropriate for their specific research interest in the field of African-American studies.

## Handbook for Graduate Students

Detailed information, application deadlines, and general information may be found in the Graduate Student Handbook.

Students are encouraged to review Graduate Studies' policies (<https://ogs.ku.edu/policies/>) related to master's programs for information about other requirements that may apply.

While completing degree requirements, graduate students are expected to understand and follow Office of Graduate Studies policies (<https://ogs.ku.edu/policies/>) relevant to their student status and academic standing.

## Plan of Study

Students are expected to discuss their plans of study with the graduate advisor. The information that follows is only a guide toward that discussion, using fall admission as an example:

Semester	Hours	Semester	Hours	Semester	Hours	Semester	Hours
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
AAAS 801 (required)	3	AAAS 802 (required)	3	AAAS 803 (required)	3	AAAS 804 (required)	3
2 electives	6	2 electives	6	1 elective	6	3 thesis hours or 2 elective courses for non-thesis option	6
Demonstrate research skill competence or begin work toward it	Demonstrate research skill competence or continue work toward it	Demonstrate research skill competence or continue work toward it	Demonstrate research skill competence or continue work toward it	Demonstrate meeting research skill competence requirement			
	<b>9</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Total Hours 33</b>							